

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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January 15, 2008

The Honorable Bert K. Stedman
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 30
Juneau AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Stedman:

Thank you for your letter concerning the draft Statewide Long Range Transportation Policy Plan (SWLRTPP). You asked for an extension of the comment period to allow for additional public comment and legislative deliberation as well as scheduling additional public meetings.

We have extended the comment period to 4:30 pm AST Monday January 21, 2008 in order to allow additional opportunity for public comment.

Scheduling additional public meetings falls outside the scope of the project and beyond the project budget however we have offered a meeting by teleconference within Ketchikan. We recognized a limited scope for this project due to its policy nature and its near-term need to meet the updated federal transportation planning requirements, and designed a public process to meet the plan's objectives. It is important to recognize that federal approval of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and amendments thereto is directly related to final approval of a SWLRTPP that meets the regulatory requirements of SAFETEA-LU. We have a major amendment to the STIP pending that also requires a lengthy public review process. Unnecessarily prolonging approval of this plan thus has negative impacts on project delivery within the 2008 federal fiscal year which would be felt throughout the state and further risks the complete loss of these federal funds.

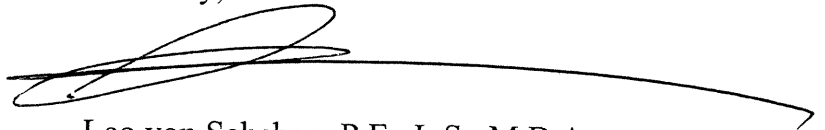
The SWLRTPP is a policy document that primarily addresses issues of overall transportation funding for the state. It does not supplant regional transportation plans; rather it addresses the funding issues that are currently lengthening implementation of plans and delaying projects. Its focus is system-level, not project-specific. Its focus is on meeting the need that has been expressed but is not being achieved. Expressing additional need is an understandable desire, but it gets us no closer to surmounting the funding dilemma. That is the challenge before us which the plan seeks to convey.

"Providing for the safe movement of people and goods and the delivery of state services."

January 15, 2008

We intend that the final plan will adequately reflect consideration of all comments received. The plan itself makes clear the need to defer to the Alaska Legislature in order to address many of the recommended actions in the plan. The immediate need to have an approved plan does not infringe upon the Legislature's need or prerogative to deliberate upon the plan's findings and recommendations. I look forward to working with the Legislature in the weeks ahead to address Alaska's present and future transportation needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leo von Scheben', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leo von Scheben, P.E., L.S., M.B.A.
Commissioner

cc: Jeff Ottesen, Director, Division of Program Development ✓
Mary Siroky, Legislative Liaison, DOT&PF